

Harry Potter and the Man of Unknown

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Summary: First fanfic of HP here, 'tis about an unknown man in Harry's life & that's all I'll give out! :-)

1. Default Chapter Title

Written b4 Azkaban!!

< >< >It was the castle in the sky. If you looked at it, though, you would most likely think it was a castle in the mountains, but it was the castle in the sky, atop of the white, never moving clouds. But, yes, if you had to be logical, it was on a mountain top, far and high from the normal people and normal castles.

< >< >It was the day of opening for the Sharadine School of Witchcraft For Girls - the only magic school to begin in August - headed by the renowned headmistress, Madam Juane Tatooli.

< >< >All the teachers and staff bustled about, making sure everything was perfect, the enchanted brooms sweeping the dusted floors. Some of the brooms became comical and tried to sweep the dirt and dust under rugs, but the school caretaker, Arana Filch, put them in order by threatening to break them in half with her bare hands.

< >< >Feather dusters dusted the coats of armor that had been covered in dust for three months who swiped at the dusters, attempting to rip out their feathers, but Professor Samantha Gooding kicked them angrily as she swooped by like a bat, making them stop.

< >< >"Professor Erwin!" a voice called, magically echoing throughout the whole castle.

< >< >The professor sighed and picked himself up from his desk in his classroom for Transfiguration. His black robes swooped across the floor and he hurried through the corridors to the front hall.

< >< >When Professor Erwin emerged in the front hall, he stopped

dead.

< >< >A black haired woman wearing long, emerald robes, looking very grave and somber, stood at the front door to the castle. Madam Tatooli stood next to the woman, the same look on her face.

< >< >"Professor?" Erwin asked with a touch of shrillness to his voice. He touched his throat nervously, a habit of his whenever he thought there was something wrong. "Madam?"

< >< >Professor McGonagall was silent for a moment in hesitation that Professor Erwin did not like at all. "Thomas, I . . . I have terrible news . . ." Professor McGonagall was suddenly at a loss for words and looked down.

< >< >"W - what is it, M - Minerva?" Professor Erwin stammered, knowing immediately that something was wrong. He touched his throat again and stroked it, as he was starting to feel very sick.

< >< >Professor McGonagall wouldn't look up, seeming both distressed and abashed.

< >< >Madam Tatooli took a step forward and gulped. "James and Lily Potter are . . ."

< >< >"What?" Professor Erwin croaked, his throat suddenly hoarse.

< >< >". . . are dead, Thomas . . ."

< >< >"What?" Erwin cried, having to steady himself against the old, wooden wall. His knees shook violently. "Is - is this a joke?" he demanded McGonagall and Tatooli sharply, his voice very high.

< >< >McGonagall looked at him and shook her head. "No, Thomas," she said softly.

< >< >"W - who? H - h - how?" Erwin stammered, forcing back tears.

< >< >McGonagall hesitated again. "V - voldemort, Thomas. It was _Voldemort_."

< >< >The was a pregnant pause, before Professor Erwin spoke.

< >< >"W - what happened to H - harry?" Professor Erwin wasn't very sure he wanted to know, but he knew that he must know, no matter what. _They're dead! Voldemort!_ he shrieked in his head with malice and grief. _All of them! Even poor Harry!_ He thought, that is, until McGonagall told him otherwise.

< >< >"T - that's just it, Thomas. Harry - Harry . . . Harry survived."

< >< >Professor Erwin stared at McGonagall, shaking harder than ever. "H - he _survived_?" He sank into a chair against the wall and buried his face in his hands. "How could a _child_ _survive_ _Voldemort_?"

< >< >"We . . . we don't know, Thomas. But when he tried to kill Harry, his powers . . . they . . . they just vanished!" said

McGonagall with shrillness. "He just disappeared. No one knows why."

< >< >"When did this happen?" Professor Erwin demanded.

< >< >"Two nights past."

< >< >"Why wasn't I told this sooner?" cried Professor Erwin shrilly.

< >< >"Ev . . . everyone assumed you knew, except . . . except for Dumbledore."

< >< >Professor Erwin's eyes flashed with anger. "Of course not Dumbledore!" he shouted with a sneer, jumping to his feet angrily. "Why _wouldn't_ Dumbledore know that _I_ didn't know?"

< >< >McGonagall looked down.

< >< >"Where has he been taken?" McGonagall didn't answer. "Where has he been taken, _Minerva_?" Professor Erwin demanded through gritted teeth, his hands in fists, clenched at his side.

< >< >"To his only living relatives," McGonagall said delicately, watching the professor carefully. "Dumbledore left him on their front step himself. I saw him, and so did our games keeper."

< >< >"_Them_?" Professor Erwin nearly shrieked at McGonagall. "Damn Dumbledore _and_ you, Minerva! Damn you both!" he shouted angrily. The professor gathered his cloaks and hurried down the corridor angrily, deliberately slamming his fist into the castle phantom, who doubled up in surprise. Professor Erwin disappeared into his chambers and wasn't seen until later that night, when the students arrived.

< >< >He looked very withdrawn and white that night. He didn't even look Madam Tatooli in the face, nor any student or other teacher. He merely watched the ceremony of the first years, who were sorted into the three groups of the school by the school fortune teller, who sat in the middle of the stage of the Great Hall, reading the first years' minds and deciding which group they belonged in, then get up and leave.

< >< >After that, Professor Erwin stared down at his plate, not eating. He collected stares from the school prefects and the teachers and staff who didn't know what the news of Voldemort's disappearance was doing to him; the other students were all too busy talking to take notice - that night. He didn't look up, but he could feel their stares. Most of all, though, he felt Madam Tatooli's hawk - like yellow eyes burning into his back like the fires of Hell.

* * *

< >< >The next day, the whole school was talking about already famous Harry Potter, whispering that he was the one who stopped You - Know - Who. It was an uproar, since everything had finally been confirmed by the _Daily Prophet_. Harry Potter - a little boy - had gotten rid of the cruel, infamous You - Know - Who! Amazing, impossible, outstanding!

< >< >There was one person, though, at Sharadine, that did not look happy at the news:

< >< >Professor Erwin.

< >< >He slammed through the door to his class, startling a group of fifth years who were excitedly talking about the incredible news.

< >< >"Shut up, all of you," Erwin snapped angrily, making them run to their seats. "This is a classroom for Transfiguration, and you know it. Not for gossiping about Voldemort - " the class gasped - "nor his hiatus from society. If I hear the name _Harry Potter_ in this classroom _ever_ again, the person who said it will be expelled - I will see to it _myself_ - do you _understand_?"

< >< >The class stared at their professor in horror. Professor Erwin was usually a nice, caring, though strict, of course, person. _A teacher_ never _threats_ students! What happened to him?_ they all wondered, but didn't speak. They knew that he was dead serious in what he said and they were all afraid to speak.

< >< >Professor Erwin glared at his students until they all nodded dumbly, still taken aback at his harsh threats. "Get out your books!" he yelled sharply. "Page one. You're back in the real world now, ladies. Deal with it and get on with your lives."

_Ten years later . . . _

< >< >After five more years of being an all girls' school, Shardine School of Witchcraft for Girls became Sharadine School of Witchcraft Merged, a school for all students, as most were coed at that time and still would be, even years and years later.

< >< >Every year, students had filtered through, always talking about the elusive Harry Potter, who had met him on the street, the next book published with his name in it, who had had the best celebration for him that year, and more, but never, ever in Professor Erwin's distance of hearing, which had seemed to grow sharper and farther every year.

< >< >Each first year student was immediately told by the older students to never speak about the subject in Professor Erwin's presence. Older brothers and sisters told their younger siblings tales that Professor Erwin had tried to expel quite a few students in the first few years after You - Know - Who had disappeared when they said "Harry Potter," but Madam Tatooli had forbidden it just in time to catch Erwin trying to boot the students out the front door of the school.

< >< >Nobody liked Professor Erwin anymore; he was too hard, snide, and seemingly evil to like. Even his favorite and best students hated him. The teachers all tried to figure out what was wrong, but Erwin wouldn't say a word, nor would Madam Tatooli.

< >< >Rumors flew through the corridors for years saying that Professor Erwin had been on You - Know - Who's side and was upset and angry that he had lost You - Know - Who and any time now, he'd fly to where Harry Potter was and kill him off on the spot - for revenge. Yet there were many who had to say - even to their dislike of Erwin - that Erwin couldn't have. He was a Gryffindor from Hogwarts and no

Gryffindor anyone knew of had crossed over.

< >< >About ten years after Harry had made You - Know - Who disappear, there was another uproar: Harry Potter was at _Hogwarts_, a Gryffindor, at that. If anyone had been around Professor Erwin and watched him carefully, they would have seen him go white and would have seen his hands begin to shake, but only few did, and they brought up the rumor of Erwin being on the Dark side again, but it was pushed away by all the excitement over Harry Potter.

< >< >"Shush your mouths," Erwin had snapped at his students after he had calmed himself. "What _have_ I told you? _Never ever_ speak that name in my classroom - ever_! Do you hear me? It is none of our business! Back to work! Dennison, turn Ms. Fletcher back to human this once or I'll drag you Madam Tootli's office and have _her_ turn _you_ into a pig!"

< >< >Suddenly, there was word of Harry being the youngest and best Quidditch player and Seeker at Hogwarts in over a century, which had caught everyone off guard - most notably when they heard that he had nearly fallen off his broom; he could have injured himself _very_ badly. Erwin had gone extremely pale once more and snapped at his students to shut up again.

< >< >But Erwin couldn't stop the uproar when _it_ happened again.

< >< >Harry Potter had defeated You - Know - Who _again_!

< >< >Professor Erwin had locked himself in his chambers after that. He couldn't have shut his students up if he'd body bound them. The teachers wouldn't shut up, either. Their faces glowed with pride in the wizard who had once again defeated You - Know -Who, which disgusted Professor Erwin.

< >< >When he finally came out of his chambers, he'd yelled at his classes: "I will expel all of you if you speak that name and you all know I will, by what rumors fly around here! So _he_ has defeated Voldemort once more! I have told you it is _none of our business_, so be quiet, all of you! And I don't really _care_ if he _is_ your role model, Mac Fly, I _forbid_ that name spoken in this classroom!"

< >< >Everyone knew then suddenly that there was something _really_ wrong with Harry Potter to Professor Erwin, yet they had no true idea of what. The older students could do nothing but stare at their professor and whisper as the school year drew to a close. The first years were dreadfully scared of Professor Erwin, except for one girl, who surprised everyone, especially Professor Erwin, in that same year.

* * *

< >< >Professor Erwin was busy writing a nasty letter in reply to a letter he had just received, when there was a light knock on his office door and a soft said, "Professor Erwin?"

< >< >"What _is_ it?" Professor Erwin snarled, not looking up.

< >< >"It's Anna Winterbourne, Professor Erwin . . ." came a soft called. The door pushed open.

< >< >"Ms. Winterbourne," said Professor Erwin, not looking up from his letter, "I didn't say you could come in, did I? Leave before I look up and you won't be punished." He thought she would leave and didn't look up.

< >< >"Professor Erwin . . ."

< >< >He didn't reply, his lips curling in anger, but he refused to look up.

< >< >"_Professor Erwin_" Anna Winterbourne nearly shouted.

< >< >Professor Erwin jumped, blotting the word, "you." He stared at Anna in surprise.

< >< >Anna Winterbourne took a deep breath and stepped up to her professor. "Professor Erwin, I am a half blood and I have had a few brothers and sisters come through here, and they have told me stories . . . stories about _you_."

< >< >Professor Erwin narrowed his eyes to where they were slits, a normal habit of his when he was angry or annoyed. "Aye, I have heard them all. _Delight_ me with one, Ms. Winterbourne. Go ahead, but realize, you'll be punished now."

< >< >Anna glared back at him, shocking him. "And the stories I heard were horrible. You suddenly turning cruel, right after _Voldemort_ - to most people's surprise, _sir_, I can say the name - disappeared, shouting at your students. I heard from my brother James - " she didn't notice Erwin flinch - "that you actually tried to _literally_ through students out the front door when they said - "

< >< >"Indeed I did and what is your point, Ms. Winterbourne?" Erwin asked sharply.

< >< >"You _must_ know everyone hates you, Professor Erwin. You are not that dumb, I can tell. And you must hate everyone else, but I have to ask . . . " Anna let her words trail off.

< >< >"What?" Professor Erwin demanded angrily.

< >< >Anna leaned in so she could whisper in his ear. "Why do you hate Harry Potter?"

< >< >Professor Erwin turned white and stared at the wall in front of him.

< >< >Anna Winterbourne turned and left, not looking back at him.

< >< >Rumors ran rampant through the school, everyone whispering about what Anna Winterbourne - a _first_ year! - had done to Professor Erwin. He wouldn't leave his chambers and it was a good thing that classes were over, to say the least.

< >< >Anna refused to say a word to anyone on _what_ she had said and left school with everyone else, still refusing to say a word. She wouldn't even tell her parents who had heard tell of it through owls from parents of other students, nor would she tell her older sister, the person she was closest to in the world.

< >< >All she would say was, "It's between the professor and me, and none of you have any right in knowing," though, that is, to say the least, she had no real idea herself why Professor Erwin had been so shaken by her words. She had expected him to say he didn't, but he had gone into a sort of shock, and that scared Anna more than anyone knew.

< >< >Professor Erwin cursed softly as he read the letter. "Dumbledore," he mumbled, "again! I should just go down to that cursed place and put Dumbledore in his place on this matter!" But his psyche put him in his place. Thomas, the boy is at Hogwarts . . . Dumbledore will do something, you know it . . . Professor Erwin cursed himself. Of course he would, he snapped to himself, why wouldn't he, the -

< >< >"Professor?"

< >< >Professor Erwin looked up, startled. "Y - yes, Anna?"

< >< >The class stared at Anna Winterbourne. It was still shocking that Professor Erwin actually talked kindly - if you will - to a student; they did not know why he was doing it, either. They thought, though, it probably had something to do with what Anna had said to him three years before, and being right as they were, if they had known what even Anna didn't know . . .

< >< >Professor Erwin had been shaken so terribly by what Anna had said to him, that he was fearful if she pried around enough, she would find something out, so he had decided to be less sharp with her. She was quite bright, he had figured out quickly, top of all her classes; he'd never noticed before, not that he paid much attention to anything like that before.

< >< >"I think most of us are done with our test, sir," Anna replied, eyeing him closely.

< >< >Professor Erwin jolted into a straight sitting position. "Ah," he cleared his throat and stroked it nervously, "yes, you are right. Pass in your papers class. When the bell rings, you may leave."

< >< >A short boy timidly approached the desk and nearly threw the test papers onto the desk and did nothing but run back to his desk. Professor Erwin didn't even look at him; he was rereading the letter that had actually come in the middle of class, carried by a large barn owl, who dropped the letter on Professor Erwin's head, surprising everyone.

< >< >When Professor Erwin suddenly realized everyone was watching him, he jumped up, rolled the parchments, and hurried out of the classroom. Just as he strode out of the door, the class exploded into whispers and he caught someone say, "What has he got there? D'you think it's from You - Know - Who?"

< >< >Professor Erwin ran to his chambers, slamming the door behind him with such force it made the castle echo with its sound. The castle suddenly grew quiet, as if preparing for more slamming from him, as they were very used to.

< >< >Suddenly, this made the professor very weary. A headache roared

in his head like a hammer bashing against metal and he fell on to his bed, shaking from head to toe, white as a sheet.

< >< >The professor woke to the sound of loud, continuous rapping on his door.

< >< >"Professor?" The rapping that had stopped momentarily started up again. "Professor Erwin?"

< >< >"What?" Professor Erwin croaked in a low, hoarse voice.

< >< >There was a pause, then a sharp crack, and the recently unlocked door swung open.

< >< >"_Professor Erwin_!" a voice shrieked. It was Madam Geoffrey, head of the infirmary, looking very shocked and worried at the sight of the professor, who knew he looked as worse as he felt.

< >< >"Madam Tatoonli!" Madam Geoffrey nearly screamed, making Professor Erwin's head pound even louder. "Madam Tatoonli! I need your help, _now_! To Professor Erwin's chambers and _hurry_!"

< >< >The bustling castle stopped dead. _Professor Erwin?_

< >< >"What is it, Lorraine?" Madam Tatoonli asked in a forced sort of normal voice a few minutes later; Professor Erwin couldn't see her, his eyes only saw blurred objects and he was staring at the ceiling.

< >< >"It's Professor Erwin, Juane, _look_."

< >< >There was an audible gasp from Madam Tatoonli. "What happened?"

< >< >"I don't know," Madam Geoffrey admitted in a soft voice. "He wasn't sick yesterday."

< >< >_Yesterday?_ Professor Erwin wondered groggily. _Have I been asleep long?_

< >< >"Let's get him to the infirmary."

< >< >"_NO_!" Professor Erwin shouted suddenly, sitting up, making the two women jump back in surprise. "If you do - even _try_ - I'll put a hex on _all_ of you!" Any strength he had left disappeared from his body and he slumped back down on the bed.

< >< >"Do you think he's serious?" Madam Geoffrey whispered.

< >< >Madam Tatoonli didn't answer, just stared at the sick professor. After a moment she said, "I don't know, Lorraine . . . I just don't know . . ."

< >< >Rumors flew through the castle like a hurricane about Professor Erwin: _Did the letter have a curse in it? Did You - Know - Who visit him? Have you heard what he looks like? He's grown scales! No, he's grown feathers! I heard he threatened to turn Madam Tatoonli into a frog with whiskers! No! A dog with feathers!_

< >< >Indeed, Professor was sickly, but he hadn't grown anything but

more weary. He refused to eat and threatened to hex anyone who came near him, but never to turn anyone into anything, although he certainly could, that was not an issue. People did stay away, but staff members always watched him around the clock, just in case . . .

< >< >Transfiguration was taken over by Madam Tatooli, who would answer no questions concerning Professor Erwin, except that he was sick, and no, he could not have visitors, nor did he want visitors, to answer Anna Winterbourne's question.

< >< >One day, late at night, Madam Tatooli was sitting in a chair across the room from the sleeping Professor Erwin, watching him. _He even shakes in his sleep,_ she marveled sadly. Professor Erwin was on his side, facing the wall, curled a bit, and shook as if he was living in the Arctic with no blanket or fire to warm him.

< >< >Professor Erwin had always been complained about; many teachers had demanded her why she hadn't fired him, and she would say he was a good teacher, just bad with people. She also loved him as a sister loves a brother and knew in her heart she could never fire him, even if her life depended on it.

< >< >He _was_ a good teacher, the other teachers couldn't argue that, for everyone he ever taught had, at least, good Transfiguration skills, but . . . _bad_ with people? That was an understatement. He _hated_ people. From Harry Potter to Madam Tatooli to Dumbledore himself, the most renowned wizard of the world, next to You - Know - Who, who was not renowned, obviously, for goodness.

< >< >"Professor Erwin," Madam Tatooli said softly, trying to blink away her tear stricken eyes, "I know you won't like this, but I will have to contact Dumbledore . . ."

< >< >Professor Erwin squeezed his eyes shut and did not reply; she didn't know he was awake. He slept so much during the day it was nearly impossible for him to sleep at night.

< >< >After Madam Tatooli left to get Professor Yuri for the next watch patrol, Professor Erwin let himself go and began to cry. When he started, he felt he never want to quit.

* * *

< >< >The professor cried himself to sleep and woke up the next morning to his chambers bright with light. He blinked and closed his eyes slightly to see. A man stood over him, his sparking blue eyes looking at the professor carefully with concern and worry, yet a twinkle of amusement was clearly there.

< >< >"You are up now, I see," the man said softly, stroking his long beard.

< >< >Professor Erwin looked away from the man. "I knew you would come. Madam Tatooli said it last night . . . but I did not know when, though I should have known . . . immediately, I daresay . . ."

< >< >"You are sick, Thomas, you should not speak."

< >< >"NOT - SPEAKING - BROUGHT - _YOU_ - HERE!" Professor Erwin

shouted suddenly, sitting up, and pointing an accusing finger at the man.

< >< >Professor Dumbledore sighed.

< >< >"Also, your constant letters for fourteen damned years, students whispering his name, rumors about me being on the Dark Side - ha - the boy arriving at Hogwarts, his being sickly, his defeating Voldemort again and again - what do you think this did to me, Albus?" Professor Erwin yelled.

< >< >Dumbledore sighed again, but it was quite obvious he didn't have an answer.

< >< >"Stop sighing!" Professor Erwin shouted. "I know what you are thinking and I am not pathetic! No matter what you or Minerva or Juane or anyone thinks!" He slumped back suddenly, exhausted.

< >< >"Of course you are not pathetic," said Dumbledore with surprise, raising his eyebrows. "I was not thinking that . . ."

< >< >"What were you thinking, then?" Professor Erwin snarled with malice, glaring at Dumbledore angrily. He didn't wait for an answer. "Get out. I thought maybe your coming here would be good, but this conversation has turned that around. Get out!"

< >< >"No!" Dumbledore yelled, surprising Professor Erwin. "No, Thomas," he said in a softer voice. "You can't ruin your life like you are doing now, Thomas."

< >< >"And why not?" Professor Erwin sneered. "And I am not ruining my life, thank you very much! My life is fine. It would be great if you and everyone else would shut up!"

< >< >"About Voldemort, Thomas?" asked Dumbledore. "About Harry Potter?" The professor flinched, but Dumbledore ignored it. "Not likely, Thomas. Not likely at all and you know it."

< >< >"And so what if I do? I've managed at least a little serenity in my life!"

< >< >"Doing what, exactly, Thomas?" Dumbledore asked fiercely. "Terrorizing your students to the point where they are afraid to speak in your presence? Afraid, that if they speak the name you have dared not utter in fourteen years, they will be expelled? Am I missing something here, Thomas? Tell me, what have you managed? Serenity? That's not serenity! That is neglect and fear!"

< >< >Professor Erwin glared at Dumbledore, his eyes turning to slits. "Leave me alone, Albus," he said quietly and coldly. "Just leave me alone."

< >< >Dumbledore lifted his spectacles to eye Professor Erwin, then left the room, closing the door behind him.

2. Default Chapter Title

< >< >Out in the hall, waited Madam Tatooli. "I will bet the whole school felt that argument, Albus," she said with an edge to her

voice.

< >< >"Juane, you know he must do it."

< >< >Madam Tatooli glared at Dumbledore and nodded coldly. "Do you somehow not think I know that, Dumbledore?" she demanded. "But I will not blackmail him to do that, do you understand? I cannot without a guilty, nor torn heart tell him I will fire him because of what he must do. Neither will I force him, though both my brain and my heart say I should, but I shall not and will not."

< >< >Dumbledore sighed and looked down. "Of course not, but Juane, believe me, he will become more withdrawn and hateful if this is not done, and then . . ." He let it sink in to Madam Tatooli. "Then, you will have to fire him."

< >< >Madam Tatooli shut her eyes for a moment, then nodded. "Yes, I know, Albus. What if . . ."

< >< >Dumbledore sighed and shook his head. "I do not know. He has had so much happening to him, both of them, that I am not even sure any of this will work out. But to here? He'd lock himself away and never come out. He needs to be in a place where he can't lock himself away."

< >< >"Give him some time, Albus. For the sake of both of them."

< >< >"All right, but if too much time passes . . ."

< >< >"Yes," said Madam Tatooli sharply, glaring at him again. "Fine."

< >< >Professor Dumbledore left her in the hall and went out the front door, smiling half-heartedly at the students and staff who stared at him as he walked by. He went back to Hogwarts, but not telling even Professor McGonagall of the circumstances.

< >< >Madam Tatooli looked through the grate that was in the door to Professor Erwin's chambers. He was sitting up, his face buried in his hands.

< >< >The next day, Professor Erwin gathered himself and walked to class, though rather carefully, as his knees still shook. It was the middle of the first class, so the halls were empty, with only the ghosts about, along with Arana Filch, but unlike everyone else, the professor knew how to stay away from her, and even her dog, Cornelia, who sniffed the halls, catching students in the act, nearly identical to Arana's brother, Argus, and his cat, except for the fact all four of them hated each other.

< >< >Professor Erwin entered his classroom and the class silenced. Madam Tatooli dropped her book, landing with a thud on the floor. "P - professor Erwin?" she asked, blinking in surprise.

< >< >"Madam," said the professor, giving her a slight nod, and a look that meant that he wanted her out. She understood immediately, and, with giving him a look that he knew meant see me later, she strode out of the room.

< >< >The students' eyes went from her to Professor Erwin who walked

to the front and picked up the book the madam had dropped. He glanced at the page on the nearest student's desk and flicked his wand, making the book suspend in air, the pages turning until it was on the right page.

< >< >"Really," he sneered, glancing at the page number again, "I'd have thought the madam would have gotten you farther." He sighed irritably. "Mark my words, you'll forget whatever she taught you. When you are taught by _me_, you _never_ forget."

< >< >The class stared at him in amazement and confusion as he sat down at his desk with another, irritable sigh.

< >< >Professor Erwin glanced at them. "What is it? Am I growing werewolf fur? One of the many rumors I have heard, I have heard a lot more. Smith!" he snapped. "Delight me with a new one."

< >< >The boy, Jackson Smith, trembled as he spoke. "Sir, I - I - "

< >< >"You have not heard any? Well, my absence must have been boring for you all, then?" Professor Erwin sneered, narrowing his eyes. "So, since this is nearly just the beginning of the year, is there anything I should know that everyone else knows and I don't?"

< >< >The class exchanged looks, then a small boy in the middle row raised a trembling hand. The class stared at him, as if knowing exactly what he was going to say.

< >< >Professor Erwin raised an eyebrow at this. "McCullin, isn't it?"

< >< >"Y - yes, sir."

< >< >"What news do _you_ have?" the professor asked in a menacing voice.

< >< >"Er, sir, I am not sure - "

< >< >"Whatever is it, tell me," Professor Erwin snapped, making the suspended book snap close and fall to the floor.

< >< >"Harry Potter went to Azkaban," the boy said quickly and shrilly, burying his head in his arms, as if preparing to ward off the professor from biting his head off and expelling him.

< >< >"_W - what_?" the professor sputtered, nearly falling out of his chair and turning white as a sheet - for at least the tenth time in the last few days. His hands began to shake and he grasp the edge of the desk to steady them.

< >< >"He - uh - saved Sirius Black, sir," someone said softly.

< >< >The class hushed and Professor Erwin jumped to his feet. "I, uh, had not heard that. T - thank you, McCullin and you, Ms. Jorganson, but as I have always said, it is none of our business and we should get on with our lives." He cleared his throat nervously, stroking it once. "Now that we have covered the daily news," the professor coughed, "on with your work. _Whippet_! Tell me _exactly_ what Madam Tatooli has been teaching you. I hope it has not been

blasphemy, or I will have to teach you the lesson over . . ."

< >< >After the day was out, Professor Erwin hurried to his chambers, slammed the door behind him, locking behind him. He sat down on his bed and put his hands on his head. _A - azkaban? Sirius Black? Is the boy insane?_

< >< >There was a sharp tap on his door and he looked up. An owl was at the grate, flapping hard, as it pushed in a large envelope. In green lettering it read:

—
* Professor Thomas Patrick Erwin
* Sharadine School of Witchcraft
* Mountain Top Cloud Castle
* Dungeon Chambers
* Alone
—

< >< >Professor Erwin stared at the envelope in hatred. "Damn you, Dumbledore!" he shouted angrily, clenching his fists and gritting his teeth. He didn't move from his bed and narrowed his eyes at the letter.

< >< >The letter stayed in it's place on the floor that night; Professor Erwin did not bother to see Madam Tatooli, she would have probably lectured him and he didn't want nor need a lecture, in his opinion.

< >< >At breakfast, Professor Erwin scrawled a note to Dumbledore, saying: _It is asinine of you to keep writing me letters, Professor Dumbledore. It would be prudent and wise of you not to do this. Leave me alone. Signed, Professor Thomas P. Erwin._

< >< >He folded the letter and gave it to his owl, who flew away, with the whole school watching it until it disappeared from sight. Then, with quick looks at Professor Erwin, they returned to a partially normal talk.

< >< >After a few days, everything turned back to normal. The students lost whatever pity they might have had for Professor Erwin during his sick days and were back to hating him.

< >< >Professor Erwin, indeed, was acting normally, or it seemed that way to everyone else, snapping at everyone, yelling and bellowing, glaring at his students, and threatening. When he was alone, though, the professor would stare at a wall for hours, ignoring the letter that he had since picked up and put on his chamber desk.

< >< >About five days after he returned on the job, he was eating a small, quiet breakfast at the head table, when the morning mail arrived.

< >< >There seemed to be a lot more owls than usual, but that often happened, especially on the day of someone's birthday or something like that; Professor Erwin rarely cared for such formalities.

< >< >All of a sudden, though, the professor realized the owls were headed toward _him_.

< >< >"_NO_!" he shouted angrily at the birds, jumping to his feet, and shaking a fist at the owls. "LEAVE - ME - ALONE!" Professor Erwin pushed back his chair and it slammed into the wall behind the curtains. He ran from the room, nearly tripping down the stairs of the stage, covering his head, as letters were being dropped on his head by the wretched creatures and sliding all over the Great Hall.

< >< >The students stared after him in bewilderment. The teachers and staff shared the same looks, except for Madam Tatooli who cursed under her breath and stood up to the school.

< >< >"_None_ of you move. Do not touch the letters. Do not speak. Professor Gooding, if you would - ?" Professor Gooding raced out of her chair and began to gather up the letters, snatching some out of the hands of confused students. "Everyone," Madam Tatooli continued, "you will not speak of this matter to Professor Erwin, nor any other matter but Transfiguration. You will also not spread rumors of the professor, either. He is under a lot of pressure and he does not need any more of it. Mark my words, if you do any of this, I will suspend you, which will seem like the royal jewels to you when I'm done."

< >< >The students nodded dimly, sharing looks of fear and shock.

* * *

< >< >After breakfast was over, Anna Winterbourne was the center of attention, though she tried desperately to run from her accusers: "What did you say to him?" - "What did you do to him?" - "You know what's going on. Tell us or we're going to Tatooli!" - "Tell us, Anna!"

< >< >Someone actually pointed a finger at her and called her You - Know - Who which made Anna blow up, scaring people half to death: "If you ever dare call me Voldemort again I will see to it that you burn in - "

< >< >"All of you!" snapped Professor Williams, looking very angry and grave, as he appeared in front of them. "You will leave this corridor this instant. Go to class. And you will shush your mouths. What I heard will get you suspended - go on, before I tell Madam Tatooli!"

< >< >The students ran to their classrooms, but the fourth years moved more slowly, staring at each other and Anna, who walked far behind everyone, her head bowed in conflicted thought.

< >< >Professor Erwin was already in his classroom, the letters strewn all over the desk. The class stared, but dared not utter a noise. Their professor suddenly jumped to his feet, scooped up all the letters, threw them into the trashcan, and with a flick of his wand, lit them on fire with a boom, to the shock of the class.

< >< >"Transfiguration does not use fire, but I felt this was a time for a change of . . . atmosphere," Professor Erwin told his class coldly, glaring at them with malice gleaming in his dark eyes. "Take out your books and begin reading chapter thirteen. I am particularly disgusted with your lack of effort." He spit in the trashcan, making the fire rise in the air at least six feet with a sharp crack.

* * *

< >< >At the end of the day, Madam Tatooli's voice called through the school. "Staff meeting for _all_ teachers. Please meet in the staff room for a discussion." The school hushed. "Classes are dismissed early for this meeting."

< >< >Professor Erwin walked out behind his students and hurried to the staff room, however, being the last one there. The teachers all watched him with looks of anger, fear, and confusion.

< >< >"Oh, no, Juane," Professor Erwin said in a shrill, angry voice. "_No_."

< >< >"Don't you dare leave here, Thomas," Professor Williams said in a cold voice.

< >< >"What are you going to do about it, Orloff?" Professor Erwin sneered.

< >< >"You aren't like some teachers, Thomas," Professor Gooding said slowly, ignoring Professor Erwin's last comment. "You are one of the _best_, we know that, and one of the best wizards in the world, but it's just . . ."

< >< >"It's just _what_?" Professor Erwin snapped angrily. "That I'm _mean_? That I'm _sharp_? That I'm _strict_? _That_ I produce some of _the best_ students ever?" He narrowed his eyes. "Or is it that I'm _me_?"

< >< >"You aren't _you_!" Professor Gooding shrieked angrily, jumping up, disgusted and angry. "_Look_ at yourself! Compare yourself to fifteen years ago! You look _thirty_ years older _now_! You _never_ eat, you are _always_ angry - and forbid, I have no idea _why_ - and - "

< >< >"It's _none_ of your business! I don't _care_ if you're concerned or angry! Don't you realize at _all_ that none of it hits? It bounces off like a balloon!" Professor Erwin shouted fiercely.

< >< >"All balloons come down _sometime_, Thomas!" Professor Larr yelled back.

< >< >"Shut up, Allan!"

< >< >"Don't tell him to shut up - _you_ shut up," screamed Professor Gooding, pointing a finger at Professor Erwin angrily. "You are a fool and a crackpot, do you hear me, Thomas? You are _crazy_!" Professor Erwin whipped out his wand and pointed it at his colleagues who leaned back in their chairs and stances, staring in horror and surprise. "I am _not_ about to take much more of this." He glared at Madam Tatooli who had been staying out of the fight, in a corner near the back of the room alone on a rickety old chair. "And if you feel the need to fire me, Madam, by all means, do it, but realize, that won't change _anything_."

< >< >The other teachers looked back and forth at Madam Tatooli and Professor Erwin, searching for some clue in the matter.

< >< >Madam Tatooli looked away and hugged herself, not daring to even look in the direction of Professor Erwin who spat on the floor angrily.

< >< >"You think that you will get this out of me, but you won't. You know it. It cannot be done. You are the fool, Madam Tatooli, no matter what Samantha or any of them say," Professor Erwin said softly and coldly. "You stop this now, Madam. I will not change my mind on this matter, and you know it."

< >< >"This isn't about the students or us anymore," Professor Williams whispered.

< >< >Professor Erwin glanced at him. "I doubt it ever was, Orloff."

< >< >"Then what was it about?" Madam Tatooli shrieked suddenly, jumping to her feet. "I told Dumbledore that I was not - not - going to blackmail you or force you, but - but - for the sake of yourself, look in the mirror for once, Thomas! You age everyday, you have no friends, you have no life! Except, of course, to terrorize your students. And I agree many of the ones you have taught are some of the best, but you bully them! That's how they learn and that is not righteous teaching!"

< >< >"And what are you doing now, Juane? Terrorizing, threatening, bullying! But you do not have the strength to get through me. I have my shell - no point in denying it, I daresay - and it helps me. It protects me from people like you and Minerva, and Dumbledore! Who all of you seem to think is the knight in shining armor who you must all worship and listen to with the greatest respect or Voldemort will get you. In the real world, you idiots, you must realize that you should not obey his every caprice and go on with your own lives that should not be worshipping him!

< >< >"And you will all stop terrorizing me this instant or I swear - on my dead brother's grave! - that I will kill myself so I will not have to listen to your protests, mockeries, and blackmail!"

< >< >Madam Tatooli and all the other teachers stared in shock (and confusion in everyone's case but the Madam's) at Professor Erwin and Madam Tatooli whispered, "This has gone way too far, Thomas . . . All of it . . . Please stop, now . . ."

< >< >Professor Erwin turned on his heel and stormed out of the room and ran to his chambers. He snatched up the beige envelope, ripped it open, and read the letter enclosed in it:

_ Professor Erwin, Thomas, _

_ < >< >I knew you would not destroy this letter. I know you. Included in this package is exactly what was in the letters you received by owls, that I will bet you probably destroyed. No matter at all, I say, but please, I beg of you, read at least a portion of what is enclosed. It will do you good, perhaps, whatever your decision. _

_ Sincerely yours, _

_ Albus Dumbledore._

< >< >The professor threw the letter to the side angrily and ripped open the rest of the envelope. Papers flew out and Professor Erwin picked them up, reading everything carefully, his eyes widening in surprise.

< >< >It was a timeline, well, in a way. There were detailed to sketchy accounts of what Harry had been through for fourteen years. His birth, his parents' death, a summary of the letter given to the Dursleys - curse them, Professor Erwin thought angrily - to detailed accounts of Harry's encounters with Voldemort, etceteras. To grades, fights, detentions, and so much more, Professor Erwin was overwhelmed.

< >< >He jumped to his feet and flung open the door of his chambers, making it crash against the wall with a large boom that made windows shake and clatter. He hurried out the front door, grabbing his broom on the way out, and mounted his broom on the front step. He flew off as fast as he could, oblivious to the yells and screams from his colleagues and students out windows, the front door, and the grounds, staring after him in shock and confusion and fear.

< >< >The air was deadly cold, but Professor Erwin didn't feel it. All he felt was determination and anger as he flew onward and onward until he had reached his destination.

< >< >Professor Erwin landed on at the front door of the castle on one foot and knocked on the door three times. He looked out at the grounds. The Forbidden Forest was right on the edge of the grounds and he could see two red headed boys being dragged away from it by a giant and smiled a bit, remembering old times.

< >< >The door opened slowly and Professor Erwin slowly turned his head, his eyes looking very evil and piercing, and his black robes flapping slightly in the wind. He would have been considered Voldemort himself, if he hadn't a noble history.

< >< >"Pr - Professor Erwin?" Professor McGonagall faltered, staring at him.

< >< >Professor Erwin nodded, but didn't take his eyes off her, giving her a hard, cold stare back. "I have come to see Professor Dumbledore," he said softly, yet still with the hardness of determination.

< >< >"He is not here at the moment," McGonagall replied crisply, seeming reluctant to let him in the castle. "What did you wish to speak to him about?"

< >< >"Isn't it obvious?"

< >< >"No, it isn't, Thomas. You have many reasons to come here - some of which endanger the students and staff here," McGonagall replied in a cold voice, glaring at him menacingly.

< >< >A girl that had come up behind McGonagall stopped dead to listen.

< >< >"What could my reason be then?"

< >< >"For - Thomas, I have no idea!" McGonagall said sharply. "But stories told - "

< >< >"The stories are nothing like the rumors, Minerva!" Professor Erwin cried shrilly.

< >< >"Thomas, Professor Erwin, I swear to you, when Dumbledore gets back - "

< >< >"Do you really think he _wouldn't_ let me pass? Let me see my brother's boy!"

< >< >"You have not spoken his name in _fourteen years_, you ingrate!" McGonagall shouted angrily. "Of all the lowest - I thought - "

< >< >"Well, you thought wrong, professor," Professor Erwin snapped.

< >< >Suddenly, a loud group of students came around a corner and stopped at the sight of Professor Erwin and McGonagall. McGonagall turned to them and said sharply, "Get out of here! This is a private conversation. You, too, Ms. Granger. Off with you all, _now_!" Everyone hurried away, not daring to look back.

< >< >The blood drained from Professor Erwin's face. "_Hermione_ Granger?" he croaked, staring after the girl in amazement.

< >< >"Of course, you know that," McGonagall snapped, turning to him. "Dumbledore sent you those packages, which I personally thought was foolish, because who knew and _knows_ what you'll do."

< >< >"Oh, _do_ shut up, Minerva, and let me pass!"

< >< >"When Dumbledore gets - "

< >< >"Like hell, Minerva! You were the one to bring the news to me of my dead brother's child's fate and now - _now_ - I am not allowed to see him?" Professor Erwin shouted angrily, glaring at McGonagall with malice.

< >< >"You've _never_ seen him!"

< >< >"Liar," Professor Erwin spat. "I saw him when he was born!"

< >< >"Do you think he'll _remember_ you?" McGonagall demanded shrilly. "He doesn't even remember his _dead parents_ and you think he'll remember _you_? You are a foolish man, Thomas."

< >< >"I have had _enough_ insults today, thank you very much, Minerva, and I don't appreciate any of it." Professor Erwin cut McGonagall off from speaking. "And further more, I never said I thought he'd remember me! I said I had seen him!"

< >< >"_Fourteen years ago!_" McGonagall cried angrily.

< >< >"Does that matter?" Professor Erwin shouted. "He's my blood!"

< >< >"I don't care if he has the blood of Godric Gryffindor himself in him - I will not let you pass!" McGonagall yelled fiercely.

< >< >Professor Erwin narrowed his eyes angrily until they were slits.

< >< >"What is going on here?" asked a sudden, sharp voice. A man appeared out of the shadows and approached Professor Erwin and McGonagall. When he could see Professor Erwin clearly, his eyes flashed with hatred.

< >< >"Severus Snape," Professor Erwin said coldly, glaring at him.

< >< >"Thomas Erwin," came the reply with a mirror of coldness.

< >< >"Hackled any good students lately?"

< >< >"Thomas," Professor McGonagall warned.

< >< >"Why, yes, in fact," Snape sneered. "His name is - "

< >< >"_Severus_! _Both_ of you!" McGonagall said angrily, pushing them away from each other. "I have had it with both of you. The fued ends here." She cut Snape off. "Look, Severus, as long as Thomas is here, the fued ends here. I cannot stand here and listen to you compare notes!"

< >< >"Does that mean I can pass finally?" Professor Erwin demanded sharply.

< >< >"When Dumbledore gets back, Thomas!" McGonagall cried. "I must have said it ten times now! What is wrong with you?"

< >< >Professor Erwin narrowed his eyes. "_Everything_, Minerva." He whipped out his wand and yelled "_Petrificus Totalus_!" Professor McGonagall's arms snapped to her side and she fell onto the floor. Professor Erwin whirled around to Snape who was reaching for his wand and pointed his own wand in Snape's face. "Ah, ah, Severus. I'll turn you into a toad before you can touch your wand, do you hear me?"

< >< >Snape stared at him in shock, then a smirk grew on his face. "What will the Ministry say?" he sneered, looking suddenly triumphant.

< >< >"If they ever met you, I'd bet they'd say terrific," Professor Erwin replied snidely.

< >< >Snape's smile faded and he began reaching for his wand again.

3. Default Chapter Title

< >< >"_Petrificus Totalus_,_ Wingardium Leviosa_!" Professor Erwin yelled.

< >< >Snape's body froze and he and McGonagall lifted off the ground, their eyes wide in fear and surprise. They floated to the ceiling,

staring at each other, then back at Professor Erwin who was sliding his wand back into his robes.

< >< >"I am sorry for doing this to you, you know - well, maybe not sorry for you, Severus - but you'll be down whenever Dumbledore or another teacher comes around here. I seriously doubt a student will risk your deaths, just by taking off the spell. It would a very stupid student who would do that," Professor Erwin said with a soft chuckle, setting his broom against the wall.

< >< >"And Severus, the reason I have not made you invisible is that I would forget and no one would see you . . . honestly, I thought you would have known that! Smart as you are." Professor Erwin glanced up at Snape who's eyes were wide with hatred and surprise.

< >< >Professor Erwin swooped away down a hall, then turned down another. He passed several coats of armor and paintings before a figure jumped out in front of him: Argus Filch, his cat at his ankles.

< >< >"Professor Erwin?" he asked blankly, expecting a student.

< >< >Professor Erwin brushed past him. "Your sister hopes you are well, Argus," he called over his shoulder. Filch sized up in anger, but didn't move or say anything, because as much as he disliked the professor, he respected and feared him, for Professor was nearly next in line to Dumbledore as best wizard in the world - and most powerful.

< >< >As he swept through the halls, he came across a flying man. "Ah, Peeves."

< >< >Peeves sneered at Professor Erwin. "'Fessor Tommy's back at Hoggys?" he asked sickly sweetly, leaning in to look at Professor Erwin, a mischievous grin spreading across his face.

< >< >Professor Erwin smiled coyly. "The Bloody Baron's been telling me that he's been quite angry with you, Peeves," he said, acting as if he had been at the school for a while that day and was very pleased about this.

< >< >Peeves looked at the professor in shock. "Er, uh, angry at Peevsie?"

< >< >"'Says you displeased him and he's very angry with you. I expect he'll be coming 'round soon. You'll be hiding, then, I suppose? He seemed very angry, but he might cool off, I suppose . . . Do his eyes pop out normally when he's extra angry, or just when he's angry?"

< >< >Peeves let out a shriek and flew away, disappearing down a corridor. Professor Erwin chuckled to himself as he hurried to the Gryffindor tower, stopping outside the picture of the fat lady.

< >< >"Is that you, Thomas?" the fat lady squawked, squinting at him.

< >< >Professor Erwin smiled and nodded. "Yes it is. How have you been, my lady?"

< >< >The fat lady smiled and blushed. "Same old, same old, I guess. No new people, except the first years, but they have nothing really to do with me, nor do the older students. Same old, same old." She sighed. "It hasn't been the same without you."

< >< >"Was I the only one that actually stopped to have a conversation, then?"

< >< >"The nicest one and most handsome, I'll say," the fat lady replied, blushing again.

< >< >Professor Erwin chortled, stroking his throat. "My lady, you flatter me, although my colleagues have complained about my current appearance. Say, how many people do you have behind this beautiful picture now?" he asked smoothly, dripping with flattery, though, if you'd asked him, he would have wanted to say he hated doing this to the poor lady.

< >< >The fat lady swelled up with pride, a smile on her face. "About everyone. I think a few prefects are out, and Fred and George Weasley, of course," she said with a sigh, "and I think Harry Potter - " she didn't see the professor wince - " - is still out, but I don't know where. Maybe the library." The fat lady smiled again. "Why do you ask?"

< >< >Professor Erwin shrugged. "Conversation. I'd better be off now - I have a meeting. Have a good day, now." He flashed her a winning smile and hurried away, toward the library, his smile fading as soon as he had turned his back.

< >< >The library was nearly empty. The librarian had her back to the professor, stacking books in a cart. There were a few students, but, alas, no Harry Potter, as no one was old or young enough, and Professor Erwin hurried out, unseen by anyone.

< >< >It was quiet in the halls, until soft footsteps began to echo in the hall. A small boy with mousy brown appeared at the end of a corridor, fidgeting with his camera. He didn't see Professor Erwin until he was five feet away from him.

< >< >"Oh! Sorry, sir, I didn't see you," the boy said.

< >< >"Quite all right, of course. I am looking for someone - are you a Gryffindor?"

< >< >"Yes! A third year," the boy said with pride. "Who are y'looking for?"

< >< >"Someone by the name - er - Patter, I think it was," the professor replied delicately.

< >< >"Patter? Oh! You're talking about - "

< >< >"All students return to their house common rooms immediately," Professor McGonagall's voice called through the house, magically magnified.

< >< >"I'd better go!" the boy chirped cheerfully, yet still with a tinge of worry. He hurried down the corridor to the Gryffindor tower.

< >< >Professor Erwin cursed angrily, shaking a fist. Someone had come and seen Snape and McGonagall - already! He mumbled a few words, disappeared from sight, and hurried to the staff room, following a small man in quickly.

< >< >"What is going on, Professor McGonagall?" a man asked.

< >< >"Professor Lupin, everyone, there is something going on that -
"

< >< >"What, Minerva?" Snape demanded angrily, jumping up from the table, clenching his fists. "Besides Erwin showing up and body binding us, then suspending us in air, leaving us to be found by Binns and Flitwick? What, besides that, is going on?"

< >< >"I will tell you, Severus," said a grave voice.

< >< >Everyone looked to the door. Dumbledore stood in the doorway. He closed the door behind him and sat down at the table. Snape looked around at everyone, then sat back down.

< >< >"As you all very well know, James and Lily Potter died, survived only by Lily's sister and the Potter's son." Snape's face twitched. "But what you didn't know is this: The Potter's are survived by another."

< >< >The blood from Snape's face drained away. "You don't mean - Thomas Erwin?"

< >< >All the teachers stared at each other in amazement.

< >< >"Impossible," Snape continued. "Who is he related to, Dumbledore? That Muggle family? Hardly!" His angry face became a sneer of disgust, like he didn't believe Dumbledore at all.

< >< >"Severus, Thomas Erwin is the half - brother of James Potter," Dumbledore said.

< >< >Snape faltered, nearly falling out of his chair. "W - what_? How?"

< >< >Dumbledore sighed. "Dear me, how?" he said with a bit of amusement. "Well, they had different mothers; Thomas is the older of them."

< >< >"You are telling me that I feu - that I went to school with two men I didn't even know were related? And you're telling me - you are, aren't you? - that Potter is related to one of the most powerful wizards in the world?" Snape yelled.

< >< >Professor Erwin leaned in next to Snape. "That's right, Severus," he whispered in a hoarse voice, making Snape straighten in his chair like a board. "My flesh and blood. And he already has a bit of Voldemort in him, too, but you knew that, didn't you? Jealous, are you?"

< >< >Snape jumped to his feet. "No, I am not, you lunatic!" He looked around wildly as if to see where Professor Erwin was, but it

was impossible. The other teachers stared at him, until he hissed, "He's here."

< >< >"Thomas," Dumbledore said suddenly in a loud voice, "show yourself."

< >< >Professor Erwin chuckled mockingly from across the room, making the teachers swivel around in their seats. "Not likely, Albus. I may have been taught by you - but I am not your slave anymore."

< >< >Dumbledore's eyes narrowed slightly and he sighed. "Thomas - "

< >< >"You really think you can convince me, don't you?" Professor Erwin sneered. "I mean, come off it, old man, you can't convince everyone anymore. There was bound to be someone who didn't listen to your every whim."

< >< >"Thomas Erwin, if I could see you, I would slap you," McGonagall snapped.

< >< >"But I can see you and I can turn you into a snail, so I advise you hold your tongue, Minerva," Professor Erwin said calmly.

< >< >"Hold my tongue - "

< >< >Dumbledore gave her a look and she fell silent. "Thomas," Dumbledore began, "for ages I have been trying to convince you to come to Hogwarts to meet Harry, but you have refused every time. Why now?"

< >< >"Other matters first, Albus, the Dursleys are the boy's only living relatives?"

< >< >Dumbledore looked at the table. "I thought you would be too distraught - "

< >< >"So you handed him over to them?" Professor Erwin snapped angrily, snapping into view, and pointed a finger at Dumbledore accusingly. "He would have been better off with Severus! I have only read things they have done to him and I was furious! How dare you even think you have the right - "

< >< >There was a sudden knock on the door and it was pushed open. Professor Erwin recognized her slightly.

< >< >"Madam Pomfrey?" McGonagall asked with a slight edge to her voice.

< >< >"All this yelling is going through the castle and it's giving Potter a headache and that's the least of his problems," the woman snapped in Dumbledore's direction, narrowing her eyes at Dumbledore, as if blaming him.

< >< >"What is wrong with him?" Professor Erwin asked, his voice suddenly shrill, touching his throat.

< >< >Madam Pomfrey glared at him. "He's sick and I doubt it's any of your business, anyway. What is your name?" she demanded

sharply.

< >< >"Thomas Erwin."

< >< >Madam Pomfrey stared at him.

< >< >"Thomas Erwin, half-brother to James Potter, uncle of . . ."

< >< >Madam Pomfrey just stared at him.

< >< >"Thomas . . ."

< >< >Professor Erwin swung his head around. "Albus," he said coldly in response.

< >< >"To finish our conversation - "

< >< >"The conversation has barely begun, you twit!" Professor Erwin yelled. He snapped his head to McGonagall. "Don't even try anything, Minerva. You may not know it, but I am a lot faster than you," he said coldly, turning back to Dumbledore.

< >< >"Thomas, please, if you will listen to me - "

< >< >"Listening to you is pointless, Dumbledore. And furthermore, back to the original conversation, what gives you the right to ship my brother's boy to people you knew would hate him? Who you knew wouldn't give him a life other than near slavery? Who would break his leg to stop him from being a wizard? Who would lock him up to stop him. Minerva warned you about them - you should have known anyway, since you seem to know everything," Professor Erwin sneered angrily.

< >< >"YOU - ARE - SICK - THOMAS!" Dumbledore suddenly yelled, making everyone jump in surprise. His eyes burned with blue fire. "I know it - you know it - everyone knows it. How many people have told you to look in the mirror? How many have to? While I was in London, I got a flock of owls from Madam Tatooli - scared out her mind - that you're going to kill yourself so you do not have to undergo all this - when you know you have to! You have not even spoken the boy's name in fourteen years - "

< >< >"Personally, this subject bores me. I have heard it dozens of times - " "And that doesn't seem to be enough, does it?" McGonagall yelled angrily. "For fourteen years, you have not spoken Harry's name, you forbid your own students to say it in your presence - everyone knows, Thomas. It's not like nobody doesn't know! How daft are you? Suspicions of you being on Voldemort's side have run rampant through the Ministry for years - and they didn't connect you with being related to Harry at all!"

< >< >"Because no one ever thought to! They all thought James Potter was an only child and they were wrong! And come off it, Minerva, you would like to know why these people are so stupid, too!" Professor Erwin yelled. "They still don't know they're wrong! They all thought we were in now way related, maybe because we never had time to actually be together after we left Hogwarts - and even then, people didn't know we were brothers, except for Lily and you, Dumbledore, of course."

< >< >"And me being connected with Voldemort? Ha! That's a laugh! The only thing I see being is connected is that we all looked alike! If you lined up pictures of the three of us, you probably couldn't tell the difference!"

< >< >"What does that matter?" Snape shouted suddenly. "Look, Thomas, you, James, and I feuded for years and I could tell the difference between you both! It was easy! And even if I had known, despite your looking identical to each other, I still would have been able to tell the difference! You were hard, James was brave. That's the difference between you and your brother that made you so apart, don't you understand at all?"

< >< >"So what about comparing the difference between Voldemort, my brother, and I?" Professor Erwin sneered, though he was penetrated by Snape's words. "One's brave, one's hard, one's evil? If you had that kind of philosophy when we were kids, Severus, why, you might have been Head Boy!"

< >< >Dumbledore cut Snape off from snapping back. "The thing is, Thomas, you never wanted to see Harry. I have pelted you with letters for years, you always had a snide comment to make, you sent that Howler on me few years back - "

< >< >"That scared the bats out of the rafters, all right," McGonagall muttered dryly.

< >< >" - you terrorized your students, colleagues, and friends. And never once did you ever write or say the name - "

< >< >"HARRY POTTER!" Professor Erwin bellowed, shaking the room. "Is that it? It that what you wanted me to say? Harry Potter! There - I said it again! Or do you want me to parade down Diagon Alley or the middle of London screaming, Harry Potter! Harry Potter!" he demanded coldly. "Because if you do, I'll do it, Albus. I'll do it! I'll follow your every whim, dear old Dumbledore - the bumblebee - sir!"

< >< >"And what do you think all your letters, a little girl asking why I hated him so, his name, his injuries, his triumphs, and his history did to me, Albus?" Professor Erwin demanded, tears suddenly forming in his eyes. "I have asked you this before and that is something you obviously don't know!"

4. Default Chapter Title

< >< >The teachers and staff in the room stared at him. He snapped his fingers and he disappeared. "Maybe it would be better to die than to go through this," he said softly before he disappeared out of the room entirely.

< >< >Professor Erwin reappeared in a dark hall and fell into a chair next to the wall, exhausted, emotionally and physically. He set his back against the wall and closed his eyes.

< >< >Maybe they are right, he said to himself miserably. I haven't spoken or written his name in nearly fifteen years, I have forbidden his name spoken in front of me, look what I have done to

myself! What would the boy say if saw me? If he learned everything about me? What would he do? He would hate you, that's what, Thomas_, he snarled to himself, making himself feel like an entity of failure.

< >< >The professor, the man, the entity - whatever who wish to call him - picked himself up, and, knees shaking, dragged himself to the infirmary, invisible as the air around him on the outside, and on the inside, as well.

< >< >When he reached the infirmary, Madam Pomfrey was guarding the door, barring Dumbledore from passing through it. "This is foolish, professor. He's in here for mild illness - not major heartbreak."

< >< >"Madam Pomfrey, this is important. He will have to find out sooner or later," Dumbledore replied with a sigh. "Madam . . ."

< >< >"Oh, all right," Madam Pomfrey said, moving away from the door and opening it.

< >< >"Give us some privacy, will you?" Dumbledore asked her as he walked through the door, neither one knowing that Professor Erwin had slipped through the door behind Dumbledore.

< >< >Professor Erwin had to sit down on the chair next to the door when he saw Harry. He was laying in bed, rubbing his throat, drinking water. He only looked up when Dumbledore cleared his throat.

< >< >"Professor Dumbledore?" Harry asked, surprised.

< >< >Dumbledore smiled. "Hello, Harry. Not well, are we?"

< >< >Harry coughed loudly. "I'm okay. Madam Pomfrey says I just need rest."

< >< >"Harry, I've come to talk to you about something . . ."

< >< >Professor Erwin suddenly felt a shock of strength, jumped to his feet, and stuck his wand in Dumbledore's back. "Don't you even dare, Dumbledore. If I have to, I will kill you," Professor Erwin whispered into Dumbledore's ear. "Believe me, I _will_."

< >< >"What is it, sir?" Harry asked, a look of concern on his face.

< >< >Dumbledore hesitated and Professor Erwin dug his wand harder into Dumbledore's back. "Nevermind, Harry. You have your rest." He moved carefully away and Professor Erwin took away his wand.

< >< >"If you dare _ever_ tell him, Albus," Professor Erwin whispered to Dumbledore, "or let anyone else, I'll kill you, and whoever said it, if not you. Do I make myself perfectly clear?"

< >< >Dumbledore walked out the door, leaving it open on purpose, and Professor Erwin heard him whispering to Madam Pomfrey who let out a muffled gasp as Dumbledore advised her not to breathe a word, for her own safety.

< >< >Professor Erwin took one last look at the bewildered boy on the bed and disappeared. He reappeared in the front hall, took his broom,

and flew out the front door, bound back to Sharadine.

< >< >When he arrived, the school was empty, or, rather, as quiet as empty. The students had deserted the hallways, meaning they were probably in their group lounges, being talked to by a teacher or whispering amongst themselves about Professor Erwin.

< >< >Professor Erwin walked in the staff room, finding the entire staff in there, looking extremely grave. "Well," he said, raising a sardonic eyebrow. "What brings this warm welcoming?"

< >< >The staff turned their stares to Madam Tatooli.

< >< >"You - you told them?" Professor Erwin sputtered, dropping his broom.

< >< >"No, Thomas, I didn't, but I nearly did," Madam Tatooli said coldly.

< >< >"Well, even if you had, it would probably had been no matter, as Dumbledore took it upon liberty of himself to tell his staff. Gave them quite a nasty shock, I will say, especially Severus," Professor Erwin said, smiling a bit.

< >< >"So, you were at Hogwarts," Madam Tatooli said, folding her arms. "Did you?"

< >< >"No," Professor Erwin snapped. "Of course not, Juane. Not with Dumbledore and Minerva and Severus ramming it down my throat. And personally, Juane, I don't think this is any of your business anymore - not that it ever was."

< >< >Madam Tatooli pressed her lips together, but did not say a word. Professor Erwin nodded at her and left the room, snapping his fingers sharply so his broom would follow him.

< >< >"Professor Erwin," called a desperate voice.

< >< >The professor whirled around in surprise. Anna Winterbourne came running down the corridor toward him. "Ms. Winterbourne?" he asked.

< >< >Anna grabbed the sleeve of his robes, as if to make sure he didn't run. "Professor Erwin, I know something is wrong. I don't deny it. Something has been wrong and I feel as if I've caused some of it."

< >< >"No! No, no, Anna," Professor Erwin said softly. "It's not your fault. It's - it's mine." He sat down on the floor, suddenly tired, and he buried his face in his hands, suddenly overcome with suppressed grief.

< >< >Anna crouched in front of him. "Professor Erwin?"

< >< >"What have I done?" he wailed in anguish, not really talking to Anna. "What will he think when he learns?" Professor Erwin yanked at his hair.

< >< >"What?" Anna asked, her eyes widening. "Who?"

< >< >"_Harry!_" Professor Erwin yelled mostly to himself. "What will he t - think when he learns that - that his uncle, who he has never known - is a sick, crackpot old fool? That he did not speak his name for years! That he shunned thinking about his brother and sister - in - law, bullied his students, scared his colleagues, terrified any friends he had left all over _him_?"

< >< >Anna stared at her professor in shock. "Harry _Potter_?"

< >< >"My half - brother's boy! I _never_ saw him! I never spoke of him as my blood! I always spoke of him as being impotent! Almost as a monster! Oh, what will he think?" Professor Erwin cried in sheer panic.

< >< >"Professor! _Professor!_" Anna yelled in his face, grabbing his wrists, and shaking him.

< >< >Professor Erwin stared at Anna.

< >< >Anna breathed harshly as she looked at him. "You are telling me that James Potter is your half - brother?" Her professor nodded silently. "And that you have not spoken Harry's name for years? You have been like you are now, because . . . because of some sort of grief?" Again, he nodded, realizing that Anna understood his pain, at least, a small part. "Professor," Anna said softly, "then, I must ask, _why_? Why have you never spoken his name? I understand that you are angry - perhaps at Voldemort, perhaps at your brother, perhaps yourself - but why you never spoke his name, why you terrorized _us_, your students - and everyone else - why you shunned him - _Harry_ - out of your life, is a mystery to me."

< >< >Professor Erwin gulped and shut his eyes for a moment, in thought. "You are the only one who understands at least a little of my pain, Anna, and that amazes me," he began. "Not even the wretched person people call Albus Dumbledore knows _any_ of my grief, of why I act the way I do, or of the pain _he_ has caused me."

< >< >"In my younger years, around your age, my dear, my brother - James - and I were at Hogwarts together. I was a year older than him, so I was there first, of course. I knew everyone, but I stuck to my studies a lot, preferring to not speak of my family history. My real mother was dead and when I was old enough, our father told me that she was killed by Voldemort, which caused to me to hate and respect Voldemort maybe more than anyone at the time and at the time, everyone was _scared_ of Voldemort - they didn't hate him _or_ respect him, their fear kept them from any of that!

< >< >"In any case, when James arrived at Hogwarts, I had little time for him, which made us grow apart, as I was driven to my studies, and he to other things, making us have little in common. No one really knew we were related - not even Severus Snape, who we both loathed and feuded with for years. And soon, I was overshadowed by my brother, as he saved Severus's life, then I left Hogwarts, and was soon forgotten there, until I rose in our world as being one of the youngest and best wizards around - and the Ministry itself never connected James and I together! Our father and James' mother were dead, so no one was there to say anything and James and I rarely spoke, so who was there to?

< >< >"The last time I saw James and Lily was when I heard Harry had

been born, through an old acquaintance - Dumbledore, of course," Professor Erwin said, clenching his fists. "I went to their home in Godric's Hollow. I was surprised - no, amazed - they were so kind.

< >< >"I have always laid a grudge against James for never setting the record straight about us - although, I should have done it myself - but it was amazing how welcoming they were. Lily was as beautiful as I had remembered her and James happy as ever - the match of a lifetime, they were, those two - and their boy . . . Harry . . . he looked amazingly like James and I, but he did not have James' eyes or my dark bluish green - he had Lily's amazing bright green.

< >< >"When . . . when they died, my heart broke. I felt as if any life I had was crashing down around me. My friends didn't matter, my students, my colleagues, or my magical history. Nothing. I was so angry when Professor McGonagall came two days after they died and told me, especially when I was told where Harry was.

< >< >"I have seen those Muggles! Bloody, ruthless characters, they are, indeed. And then, everyone talking excitedly about Harry, bore into my heart like a nail into wood. These students had no feelings for Lily and James - and they had produced this boy, their savior! They didn't even care about them! Nor did anyone ever at least show the slightest mercy or benevolence for their deaths! No one ever has.

< >< >"Then, a few days after I was told, the letters started. All from Dumbledore, who always knew everything, so of course he knew James had been my brother. There was always the letter on Harry's birthday, or James' or Lily's, and on mine. A fine present for me. I burned them all. They all said Thomas, you must stop this. Tell everyone. Have a good day._

< >< >"Have a good day my foot! Dumbledore has always provoked me since I was at Hogwarts. I don't even care now that he is the best - I hate him. I think I always will. And, of course, letters came when Harry came to Hogwarts."

< >< >Professor Erwin sighed. "It said: Harry has now arrived at Hogwarts, Thomas. It is time._ Time? Time? Time for Dumbledore to think he was right again, yes! Well, he was not! He thought I'd come and I didn't, the fool.

< >< >"Then, of course, there was the uproar of Quidditch, then his injuries, then his defeating Voldemort twice, and so much more. And among all that, the rumors of me being connected with Voldemort and hating Harry, which made me nearly die, Anna . . ." he said softly.

< >< >Anna gulped. "Sir, I - I didn't know . . ."

< >< >Professor Erwin shook his head. "No, of course not . . . nobody did. Of course, then, I got sick, I guess, after reading a letter from Dumbledore, saying Harry is doing well. He has many friends, his grades are up, but I will bet he would like to know that his father had a brother . . . And then, everything seemed to hit me and the world spun for days."

< >< >"Then, you came back and had an argument with Professor

Dumbledore and then the other teachers . . ." Anna said slowly and carefully.

< >< >Professor Erwin smiled weakly. "I assume you heard it, then?"

< >< >"We all felt it, sir. Every argument is usually felt, and your slamming around, yelling. It's normal to everyone, Professor Erwin. I shan't say you don't know that?" said Anna.

< >< >"Well, of course, I know," Professor Erwin said. "It's normal, eh? That's another thing that got to me and I suddenly raced to Hogwarts the other day, determined to meet Harry face to face.

< >< >"Wasn't McGonagall surprised when I showed up," mused the professor with a small smile. "Severus Snape, too. And I rather surprised them I think when I body bound them and made them float in the air."

< >< >Anna stared at him and Professor Erwin chuckled softly. "I did not injure them, if that's what you're thinking, but they wouldn't let me in the castle and I was determined to get through. I went to the Gryffindor tower to find out where Harry was from the fat lady - a picture that would know. She wasn't much help, though.

< >< >"Suddenly, while I was talking to a student trying to find him, there was a call for all students to return to their common rooms and I knew that Minerva and Severus had been found, so I hurried to the staff room." Professor Erwin sighed. "I know this is a long story, Anna, so I will just say there was a fight and I headed home, or rather, here."

< >< >Anna looked at her professor in astonishment, then chose her words carefully. "Professor Erwin, sir, you can tell me this, but you cannot tell your own flesh and blood?"

* * *

< >< >The next day was a rather quiet one, to the shock of the students. The teachers tried to act normally and pulled it off on the students; Professor Erwin being reserved and silent, though this was a normal behavior of his. Everything seemingly back to normal. Normal, that is, until lunch.

< >< >Professor Erwin was walking to lunch, through the front hall, when the front door opened and a man walked through. The professor stopped dead in his tracks, causing students behind him to crash into one another. Cornelius Fudge and two others.

< >< >"Professor Thomas Patrick Erwin!" Fudge called, spotting the professor, making the students all stare at their professor, including Anna who had no idea what was going on, along with the rest of them. "I have come to put you under arrest for the threat of the murder of Albus Dumbledore." The crowd gasped. "Come quietly and - "

< >< >"Like hell you will arrest me!" Professor Erwin shouted, running back the way he came, shouts of alarm echoing after him. The professor ran to his room, snatched up his broom, and disappeared with a loud crack just as Fudge and his officers scrambled into the

room.

< >< >The professor appeared on the far edge of the Sharadine grounds. He mounted his broom and flew away, not even taking a look behind him. Sharadine was suddenly merely a dream to him, a spectacle of his imagination.

< >< >Everything was a dream now, except for Harry Potter, who stuck out in Professor Erwin's mind like a nail stuck in his hand. It hurt and he could not pull it out without leaving some sort of guilt in him, that would injure him more than leaving the nail in it's place. As he flew and flew, he began to cry and feared he'd never stop.

< >< >_Professor Thomas Erwin flew to a forest far from anyone's prying eyes and lived there as a hermit for five years until he died of what some people would call heartbreak and misery. It was years and years before someone hunting would find his body and an unnamed gravestone would stay beside the shack he lived in for a while before the forest burned. _

_ < >< >When Harry turned twenty-five, a woman his age with better knowledge would appear at his doorstep, and hand him a letter, then walk away, disappearing at the end of the walk. _

_ < >< >What Harry would find in the letter would make him bury his face in his hands and cry, blurring the ink of the letter, but he would remember the words for the rest of his life, knowing he would never forgive his uncle, but still have a love for him, as he was his flesh and blood. _

_ ****Author's note:**** I know this story was a little weird and the characters a little off, but I am a person who likes dramatic sequences in stories. I wrote most of this story in about five days, totaling a little over thirty-four pages in all. It was originally going to be something totally different and unrelated to Harry Potter, but it obviously didn't turn out that way. _

_ < >< >I had always wondered about another relative that Harry might have, just being either hidden or unbeknownst to most. Also, I slipped in slight notes of propriety (suitability) - in my opinion - of how Dumbledore seems to deal with things, like he thinks he is right most of the time or everyone will listen to him. That's something that started bugging me a while ago. _

_ < >< >For a note, I wrote this before I read Prisoner of Azkaban (as of September fourth, I still have not) and this is dated after that book, so if I messed up a little and you think Professor Lupin would have been more into the conversation, well, I didn't know his personality or anything besides his name, Remus, I think (which, by the way, I think is derived from the brothers Romulus and Remus).
_

_ Oh, and as of September ninth (AKA 9/9/99) I read _Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban_. Hmm. I actually wish Harry had gone to Azkaban. ::sigh:: I didn't like the book too well, to admit to you all who read this. _

_ < >< >Also, the first paragraph of this story was referring to a picture of this very interesting castle. You can visit my site where you can actually see the picture. (A link to my page is in my bio

area. Visit it, please!!! ::whines a bit, then shuts up::) _

_ < >< >In any case, I hoped you enjoyed the story; it's my first fan fiction ever. _

_ ~Gypsy_

End
file.